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GAO: FAA BUDGET REQUEST DOES NOT REFLECT REALISTIC STAFFING NEEDS

The air traffic control system has "fewer air traffic controllers than it did in 1981 to handle more traffic within the same system," according to a report by the General Accounting Office. Conducted at the request of Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), the study said FAA's request to increase the controller workforce by only 225 positions in fiscal year 1988, "does not reflect realistic staffing needs."

During a hearing last week, Lautenberg said he is frustrated with the "widespread and dramatic" shortages of fully qualified air traffic controllers and said FAA Administrator Donald Engen is "in the unenviable position of serving two masters...air safety and the Office of Management and Budget."

The GAO's report pointed to several discrepancies in full performance level staffing at air traffic control facilities as reported by the GAO and FAA's personnel management information system (PMIS). When confronted with the discrepancy, Engen said he didn't "want to get into an argument over numbers...we are not where we want to be, but we are moving in that direction...there is not a position in the entire system that is not manned by a fully qualified person for that position." Engen said the number of full performance level controllers would never reach "the ideal number of 13,000," but said it could reach 12,000. Engen said there are currently 9,565 FPLs throughout the system, representing 70 percent of the total controller workforce. Engen said the FY 1987 goal of 15,089 was met at the end of March, and the April work force is at 15,132. He said FAA was requesting a minimum controller workforce of 15,225 by Sept. 30, 1988 (see related article on Page 148).

Herbert McLure, associate director of GAO, said FAA has not "rebuilt the air traffic control workforce to current staffing standards and goals," and said it should "do more to tailor air traffic to the capabilities of its controllers." McLure also said because FAA cannot quickly increase the number of air traffic controlelrs or provide new equipment to reduce the workload, it is "left with two choices: stretch the controllers or limit air traffic." McLure said he agreed with remarks made by National Transportation Safety Board Chairman James Burnett that FAA should limit traffic (BA, May 4/138).

BEECH TO PAY COST OF MODIFYING V-TAIL BONANZA FLEET

Beech Aircraft Corp. said last week it will pay for airframe modifications necessary to relieve operating restrictions on some 5,300 V-tail Bonanzas. A series of speed restrictions were imposed on V-tail Bonanzas last fall after a lengthy series of tests by FAA and the manufacturer revealed a potential problem with load distribution on the tail assembly (BA, Oct. 20/121).

FAA figures show that Beech had built a total of 10,405 V-tail Bonanzas beginning in 1947 and ending in 1982. Beech said there currently are about 7,200 V-tails still in service, of which approximately 5,300 will require tail modifications. The remaining 1,900 V-tail Bonanzas—including the Model 35, A35 and B35 built between 1947 and 1950—do not need the modifications, Beech said. In addition, the approximately 5,400 conventional-tail Bonanzas built since 1960 also are not involved in the modification program.

Modifications for the affected V-tails include a small fuselage-mounted brace positioned over the stabilizer leading edge on C35 through V35B Bonanzas built between 1951 and 1982. An additional external stabilizer reinforcement will be added to C35 through G35 models built between 1951 and

(Continued on the following page)

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AIRPORT & AIRWAY TRUST FUND
Status As Of Feb. 28, 1987

	CURRENT MONTH	FISCAL YEAR TO DATE
I. BALANCE - BEGINNING OF PERIOD	$ 9,134,854,479.18	$ 8,625,199,213.60
II. RECEIPTS:		
A. Excise Taxes (Transferred from General Fund):		
Any liquid fuel except gas	5,945,000.00	29,172,000.00
Tires used on aircraft	0.00	0.00
Tubes used on aircraft	0.00	0.00
Gasoline		
1. Commercial 9 cents tax	218,000.00	1,125,000.00
2. Non-commercial 9 cents tax	1,807,000.00	13,998,000.00
3. Non-commercial 3 cents tax	602,000.00	4,805,000.00
4. Transp by air,seats,berths,etc.	219,245,000.00	1,060,741,000.00
Use of international trav fac	7,708,000.00	39,889,000.00
Transp of property and cargo	13,225,000.00	62,874,000.00
Total Tax Receipts	248,750,000.00	1,212,604,000.00
B. Less Reimbursement to General Fund - Refund of Taxes and Estimated Tax Credits :		
1. Civil aircraft	0.00	50.00
2. Any liquid fuel except gas	0.00	2,492,050.00
3. Gasoline -Retailer's tax	0.00	2.180.00
4. Gasoline -Manufac. tax	0.00	270.00
Total Reimburse For Tax Refunds	0.00	2,494,550.00
Net Tax Receipts	248,750,000.00	1,210,109,450.00
C. Interest on Investments	883,624.80	421,095,634.86
Net Receipts	249,633,624.80	1,631,205,084.86
III. EXPENDITURES :		
A. Federal Aviation Administration :		
1. Operations	48,500,000.00	227,350,000.00
2. Grants-in-aid for airports	67,595,178.07	448,782,273.89
3. Facilities & equipment	55,276,223.13	286,848,731.22
4. Research engineering & development	5,851,008.17	78,907,578.74
B. NOAA weather services	0.00	7,250,000.00
C. Interest on Refund of Taxes	0.00	20.00
Total Expenditures	177,222,409.37	1,049,138,603.85
IV. BALANCE - END OF PERIOD	9,207,265,694.61	9,207,265,694.61

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL CONDITION

ASSETS :		
Undisbursed Balances:		$
Airport & Airway Trust Fund	10.76	
Operations	-4,635.34	
Grants-in-aid for Airports	11,393,456.43	
Facilities & Equipment	12,869,828.08	
Research Engineering & Development	7,572,034.68	
NOAA weather services	0.00	
		$ 31,830,694.61
Investments :		
U.S. TREASURY CERTIFICATES OF INDEBTEDNESS:		
8-3/4% maturing JUNE 30, 1987	$ 161,225,000.00	
8-7/8% maturing JUNE 30, 1987	402,388,000.00	
9-1/8% maturing JUNE 30, 1987	15,623,000.00	
9-1/4% maturing JUNE 30, 1987	71,331,000.00	
9-3/8% maturing JUNE 30, 1987	41,623,000.00	
9-1/2% maturing JUNE 30, 1987	59,514,000.00	
9-3/4% maturing JUNE 30, 1987	8,423,731,000.00	
		9,175,435,000.00
Total Assets		9,207,265,694.61
LIABILITIES:		0.00
EQUITY:		
Excess of Assets over Liabilities		$ 9,207,265,694.61
Total Liabilities and Equity		9,207,265,694.61

Treasury Department Chart